

**VA**



**U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs**

**Doctoral Psychology Internship Program**

**Lexington VA Health Care System**  
Mental Health Service (116A5-LD)  
1101 Veterans Drive  
Lexington, Kentucky 40502  
(859) 233-4511, extension 3237  
<http://www.lexington.va.gov>

**MATCH Number: 131211**  
**Applications due: November 1, 2023**

Dear Potential Applicant,

We are excited about your interest in our psychology internship program and look forward to the opportunity to tell you more about training at the Lexington VA Health Care System. The psychology internship program offers a wide range of clinical experiences across our two facilities working within our large mental health service. We provide training for 5 psychology interns each year. All interviews will occur virtually from 9:00 AM EST to 12:00PM EST on the following dates: Monday December 11, 2023; Friday December 15, 2023;; Friday January 12, 2024; and Tuesday January 16, 2024. Please feel free to contact us with questions.

Sincerely,  
The Lexington VAHCS Internship Training Committee

***Accreditation Status***

The doctoral internship at the Lexington VA Health Care System has been accredited by the American Psychological Association (APA) since 1982. The program has been reviewed by the Commission on Accreditation and was awarded the maximum 10 years of full accreditation. The next site visit will occur in **2028**.

***\*Questions related to the program's accredited status should be directed to the Commission on Accreditation:***

Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation  
American Psychological Association  
750 1st Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002  
Phone: (202) 336-5979 / E-mail: [apaaccred@apa.org](mailto:apaaccred@apa.org)  
Web: [www.apa.org/ed/accreditation](http://www.apa.org/ed/accreditation)

## ***Application & Selection Procedures***

### **Nondiscrimination Policy**

Equal opportunity laws and Department of Veterans Affairs regulations prohibit discrimination based upon race, color, national origin, limited English proficiency, age, sex, handicap or reprisal. This applies to all programs or activities conducted by VHA. The Lexington VA Health Care System Psychology Internship Program adheres strictly to all federal and local non-discrimination laws and policies.

### **Eligibility for VA Employment: [Click Here](#)**

1. U.S. citizenship. VA is unable to consider applications from anyone who is not currently a U.S. citizen. Verification of citizenship is required following selection. All interns and fellows must complete a Certification of Citizenship in the United States prior to beginning VA training.
2. A male applicant born after 12/31/1959 must have registered for the draft by age 26 to be eligible for any US government employment, including selection as a paid VA trainee. Male applicants must sign a pre-appointment Certification Statement for Selective Service Registration before they can be processed into a training program. Exceptions can be granted only by the US Office of Personnel Management; exceptions are very rarely granted.
3. Interns are subject to fingerprinting and background checks. Match result and selection decisions are contingent on passing these screens.
4. VA conducts drug screening exams on randomly selected personnel as well as new employees. Interns are not required to be tested prior to beginning work, but once on staff they are subject to random selection for testing as are other employees. See Appendix III for VA Drug Free Workplace Guide.
5. Verification of initial and ongoing VA appointment eligibility, including health and vaccination status.
6. Health Professions Trainees (HPTs) are appointed as temporary employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs. As such, HPTs are subject to laws, policies, and guidelines posted for VA staff members. There are infrequent times in which this guidance can change during a training year which may create new requirements or responsibilities for HPTs. If employment requirements change during the course of a training year, HPTs will be notified of the change and impact as soon as possible and options provided. The VA Training Director for your profession will provide you with the information you need to understand the requirement and reasons for the requirement in timely manner.

### **Eligibility for Application to Internship Program:**

1. Doctoral student in good standing at an American Psychological Association (APA) or Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) accredited graduate program in Clinical, Counseling, or Combined psychology or Psychological Clinical Science Accreditation System (PCSAS) accredited program in Clinical Science. Persons with a doctorate in another area of psychology who meet the APA or CPA criteria for re-specialization training in Clinical, Counseling, or Combined Psychology are also eligible.
2. A minimum of 500 hours of documented, psychologist supervised direct client contact hours through a combination of therapy and assessment experience. These hours must be through practicum experience within an APA doctoral program in counseling or clinical psychology. This must be verified by the training director of the doctoral program.

3. Completion of comprehensive examinations by February 1, 2022. This must be verified by the Training Director of the doctoral program.
4. Written verification by the Training Director of the doctoral program that the individual is approved for internship status by the Department.
5. All coursework must be completed prior to beginning the Internship.

The Lexington VA Health Care System Doctoral Internship is participating in the APPIC Uniform Application Process. You may access the online application from the internet ([www.appic.org](http://www.appic.org)). Your Training Director will need to complete the online Verification of Internship Eligibility and Readiness form.

***We require through online submission:***

1. Online APPIC Application for Psychology Internship (AAPI) submitted through the APPIC
2. All graduate transcripts (including those which did not confer a degree)
3. Three letters of recommendation

All materials must be submitted through the online application process. No materials will be accepted through email or postal mail. Interns who are matched with the Lexington VA Health Care System will have to submit official transcripts of all undergraduate work.

***Questions concerning the Internship Program may be sent to:***

***Director of Internship Training***

Josh Phillips, Ph.D.  
Lexington VA Health Care System  
Mental Health Service (116A5-LD)  
1101 Veterans Drive  
Lexington, Kentucky 40502  
(859) 233-4511 extension 3237  
[Joshua.Phillips@va.gov](mailto:Joshua.Phillips@va.gov)

The ***application deadline is November 1, 2023***. Once the applications are reviewed, those under consideration will receive invitations to for virtual interviews. The program will exclusively utilize virtual interview formats. There will also be several backup interview options available to acomodate technical difficulties and other unforeseen events with this new format.

The Lexington VA Health Care System Doctoral Internship conforms to APPIC (Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers) uniform notification procedures.

***Psychology Setting***

The Lexington VA Health Care System consists of two divisions, five miles apart, which are consolidated under one management. The Souselly Campus and the Bowling Campus house beds for both psychiatric and non-psychiatric patients. The Souselly Campus was completed in 1931 and is located in the northwest area of Lexington in a park-like setting of 135 acres. This older facility has been the recipient of numerous renovation projects in the past several years, and has recently been slated for major

renovations and expansion for both inpatient and outpatient services. The Soursley Campus houses the Mental Health Clinic, the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Clinical Team (PCT), the Outpatient Substance Abuse Treatment Program (SATP), the inpatient PTSD treatment program (PRRP), the inpatient substance abuse program (SARRTP), the Community Living Center (formely known as the Nursing Home and Rehabilitation Units), and a program for homeless veterans. The Bowling Campus, dedicated in 1973, is physically connected to the University of Kentucky Health Care System in central Lexington. This Division provides general medical, surgical, neurological, and acute inpatient psychiatric services.

The Lexington VA Health Care System offers healthcare to approximately 94,000 veterans living in 36 counties in Central and Eastern Kentucky. Approximately 4,000 OEF/OIF veterans are seeking healthcare through the Lexington VA Health Care System . With regards to the veterans' ages, approximately 6% of the veterans served through the Lexington VA Health Care System are younger than 35; approximately 46% are between that ages of 36 and 65 and approximately 48% are over the age of 65. Approximately 95% of the veterans we serve are male; 5% are female. Most of the veterans served are Caucasian and indigenous to Appalachian regions of Kentucky.

### ***Training Model and Program Philosophy***

The Lexington VA Health Care System Internship utilizes the practitioner-scholar philosophy. The primary objective of the internship is to provide an integrated, flexible and balanced set of learning experiences necessary for interns to emerge as competent professional psychologists. These experiences are intended to provide the aspiring psychologist with opportunities to practice and expand on previously learned skills, to develop new skills and to experience personal and professional growth. Our belief is that these objectives can best be achieved through comprehensive training based upon the following three principles:

1. Training in a breadth of clinical skills central to the practice of psychology.
2. Training emphasizing content areas relevant to the intern's career goals.
3. Training in the ethical and professional standards central to the practice of psychology.

As a federal employer and an equal opportunity training program, our facility and department of Psychology strongly adhere to policies on non-discrimination and accommodations to facilitate success in our internship. The Lexington VA Psychology Training Committee believes that diversity presents in multiple facets. We consider diversity as including various cultures, values, and experiences of trainees and faculty, as well as different theoretical models, research paradigms, and ways of professional practice. As a program, we prioritize diversity recognition and sensitivity. To that end, each intern completes a diversity project over the course of the internship year. The goal of this project is to examine the impact of culture, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, and other cultural factors on theory and practice in clinical psychology, within the VA Health Care System. Interns collaborate with the training committee regarding the initiating and planning of their Diversity project. Interns present to their projects to the training committee in the Spring. In addition to the diversity project, interns also will be guided through exploratory and scholarly discussions on topics related to cultural diversity, inclusion and mental health practices through the didactic series.

### ***Program Structure***

The internship program requires interns to commit to a full-time 12-month program beginning the first federal pay period in July. Interns work 40-hour weeks, standard tour of duty being 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday. Interns are granted 10 paid federal holidays. Interns accrue 4 hours Annual Leave (personal vacation) and 4 hours Sick Leave per biweekly pay period for a total of 13 days Annual Leave and 13 days Sick Leave over the course of the year.

There are two 6 month rotations comprised of a major and minor rotation placement. Interns spend two days per week performing duties associated with their major rotations, one day per week performing duties associated with their minor rotations, one day in a year-long outpatient mental health clinic rotation, and Fridays in training-related activities, including one hour Group Supervision, two hour Didactic Seminars. Fridays also includes dedicated time for psychological assessments, that can be flexed for other specific clinical activities. Activities and roles associated with major and minor rotations vary, but generally include individual and/or group psychotherapy, psychological assessment, documentation, and report writing, training, and supervision. Interns are required to obtain at least 1.5 hours individual face-to-face supervision per week on their major rotations and at least 0.5 hours individual face-to-face supervision per week on their minor rotations. An additional hour on their minor and major rotations through additional individual face-to-face supervision, multidisciplinary team activities, and/or supervision by a non-psychologist. Interns are required to spend at least 25% of their time performing clinical activities, for a minimum of 500 clinical contact hours over the course of the internship year.

***Major Rotations include:***

- Mental Health Clinic (MHC)
- Outpatient PTSD Clinical Team (PCT)
- Inpatient Specialty Psychology
- Outpatient Substance Use Treatment Program
- Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program (MHR RTP)

***The choices for minor rotations are:***

- Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation Program (MHR RTP)
- Psychology Administration
- Primary Care
- Geropsychology
- Pain Psychology
- Research
- Outpatient PTSD Clinical Team (PCT)

Interns will be asked to identify their preferences for rotations prior to their arrival and every effort will be made to honor these requests. Other training opportunities may be available, including opportunities to complete certifications in EBPs, specific focus training events, and alternative rotations (depending on intern training goals, supervisor availability, and logistical specifics).

***Training Experiences***

**Major Rotations:**

**1. Mental Health Clinic**

The Mental Health Clinic (MHC) is one of the primary units of delivery of outpatient mental health services for the Lexington VA Health Care System. Its major role is to provide ambulatory mental health care for veterans and their family members. The mission of the MHC is to employ effective psychotherapeutic treatment for individuals who are afflicted with a wide range of Axis I and Axis II diagnoses and whose problems prevent adequate functioning in their home and community. The core treatment staff consists of psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, and psychiatric nurses. The intern functions as a full member of the interdisciplinary team and engages in a wide variety of outpatient psychotherapeutic and evaluation functions.

## **2. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Clinical Team (PCT)**

The Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Clinical Team (PCT) offers exposure to the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of veterans suffering from PTSD. Individual therapy modalities offered through this clinic are primarily CBT and PE. There are opportunities to understand the dual-diagnosis aspects of PTSD, the impact of traumatic brain injury, and the accumulated effects of trauma across the lifespan behaviorally, psychologically, and interpersonally. Practicum students participate as members within the unit's interdisciplinary team in the provision of treatment.

## **3. Inpatient Specialty Psychology**

This rotation provides experiences across the Acute Medicine and Emergency Department at the Bowling Campus of the Lexington VA. Time is split between clinical areas that assess and treat patients at bedside while hospitalized. This includes providing individual therapy and completing psychological assessments for amputations, transplants, and decision making capacity (including opportunities for cognitive screenings in the assessment of dementia and traumatic brain injury). Risk assessment and consultation services provided for a range of mental health issues.

## **4. Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program (MHR RTP)**

The Mental Health Residential Recovery Treatment Program (RRTP) is the lowest level of inpatient care offered by the Veterans Health Administration. The Lexington program is a 30 bed all inclusive, structured, residential program specializing in the treatment of PTSD and Substance Abuse/Dependence. The RRTP accepts veterans with additional challenges such as homelessness, or other serious mental illness, such as Bipolar Disorder, depression, and stable psychoses. The intern will function as part of an interdisciplinary treatment team and will engage in screenings, psychological assessments, group psychoeducation, process groups and individual psychotherapy. Exposure to evidence-based psychotherapies for PTSD and Substance Use will be an important element of this rotation.

## **5. Outpatient Substance Use Treatment Program**

The Outpatient Substance Use Treatment Program is an outpatient mental health treatment clinic that provides multidisciplinary care to individuals with substance use disorders and other impulse-control related problems (such as gambling and problematic internet use). Various disciplines collaborate to provide a range of services, including intensive outpatient group therapy, several substance use groups, DBT skills group, individual therapy, and opioid replacement therapy. SATP providers collaborate with other clinics (e.g., PCT, Inpatient psychiatry, MHR RTP) and the community (e.g., Veteran's Treatment Court) to facilitate continuity of care.

### **Minor Rotations:**

#### **1. Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program (MHR RTP)**

In addition to the major rotation, this rotation is offered as a supplemental minor rotation. See above for more information.

#### **2. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Clinical Team (PCT)**

In addition to the major rotation, this rotation is offered as a supplemental minor rotation. See above for more information.

#### **3. Primary Care**

Interns in this minor rotation will work with a psychologist in the Primary Care clinic. Training activities focus on behavioral health interventions including weight loss and smoking cessation. Interns may perform organ transplant, infectious disease and surgery evaluations in order to assess factors that

require remediation in order to encourage a successful procedure. The intern may provide behavioral health strategies to help patients with chronic pain. Finally, the intern may co-facilitate groups in the MOVE Weight Management Program. As interns gain experiences and efficacy, they are encouraged to provide input as to improvements/modifications to existing rotational components in order to improve patient care.

#### **4. Geropsychology**

In the Geropsychology rotation interns may complete rotations in either the VA Community Living Center (CLC) or Home-Based Primary Care (HBPC). The CLC service provides short and long stay rehab as well as inpatient hospice services. HBPC provides in-home, interdisciplinary primary care for veterans with complex and chronic, disabling disease. Mental health services provides interventions, support, and assessments. Interns are involved in screening, assessment, diagnosis and treatment for psychiatric and cognitive disorders.

#### **5. Pain Psychology**

Interns in this rotation work with a Pain Psychologist and team treating chronic pain with EBP and biofeedback. Interns are involved in intakes, staffing, and individual therapy for chronic pain. Interns will be trained in biopsychosocial case conceptualization and evidence-based psychotherapy for chronic pain (cognitive behavioral therapy for chronic pain [CBT-CP], mindfulness-based stress reduction [MBSR], and biofeedback interventions).

#### **6. Psychology Administration**

Interns who chose this minor rotation will be involved in a number of administrative experiences including internship selection process, training committee, and assorted mental health committees. Emphasis on long term planning, documentation and vision for the future of psychology training in VA.

#### **7. Research**

Interns on the mental health research minor rotation have the unique opportunity to participate in research and/or program development projects at the Lexington VA. Current projects on this rotation focus on improving residential and outpatient substance use treatment outcomes and developing and testing models of intervention on impulsivity and personality. Interns work closely with the rotation supervisor to develop an idea for their own research project that is feasible to complete on internship.

#### ***Requirements for Completion***

The internship is a one-year placement experience requiring 40 hours per week. The intern is required to complete a minimum of 2,080 hours. Each intern is expected to devote 25% of his/her time to direct patient contact which includes "face-to-face" contact with patients for any type of group or individual therapy, psychological testing, rounds or patient education. Successful completion of the internship requires a minimum of 500 hours of direct patient contact.

Interns are required to present a minimum of one diagnostic and one therapy conference. The diagnostic/therapy conferences are designed to assist in evaluation of an intern's level of competency as related to basic diagnostic assessment and intervention. Additional conferences are scheduled as deemed necessary. Staff evaluates the presentations through therapy/diagnostic conference evaluation guides.

Interns are required to complete a diversity project. This project is intended as a training exercise to increase awareness of, and attention to, diversity issues in the practice of psychology. To successfully complete the diversity project, the intern must identify an issue or problem related to diversity within

the Lexington VA Health Care System, learn about the background of the issue, and carry out a plan to address the issue.

Interns will have the opportunity to supervise practicum students in the outpatient Mental Health Clinic. Interns will complete didactic trainings in the theory and practice of supervision prior to providing supervision. Primary rotation supervisors in the clinic will provide umbrella supervision and be responsible for supervision of supervision. Supervision provided by the intern is in addition to the required supervision by a licensed psychologist who is the direct, primary supervisor of the practicum student.

Interns will receive formal, written evaluations at the middle and end of each rotation from the major and minor rotation supervisor. Additionally, interns will be asked to provide written and oral feedback regarding their internship experiences at the end of the year to the Training Director.

The expected level of competence as indicated in interns' formal evaluations are as follows:

- Minimum ratings of 3 on all items within each competency domain for end of 1st rotation.
- Minimum ratings of 4 on all items within each competency domain for end of 2nd rotation.
- Therapy Case Presentation requirements fulfilled.
- Assessment Case Presentation requirements fulfilled.
- Diversity Project Presentation requirements fulfilled.

Interns will provide the Training Director the following minimum documentation for the records (with patient identification removed): 5 progress notes, 2 psychological assessments, diversity project materials, and diagnostic, and therapy conference written materials.

### ***Facility and Training Resources***

Each intern is provided with office space with an individual computer, desk and office supplies. Clerical support is provided by each internship rotation. The VA medical record is electronic and all patient documentation is done via the computer system. Concerning library access, interns have the use of the Lexington VA Health Care System library, University of Kentucky Medical School library, University of Kentucky library system, and the Fayette County library system. The Lexington VA Health Care System has full access to a number of online databases, including EBSCO. The psychology staff has access to a psychological testing laboratory including the MMPI2-RF, PAI, Rorschach, BNCE, TOMM, RBANS, DRS-2 and the WAIS-IV. Additionally, interns have access to electronic calendars, copying services, audio/video tapes, and medical treatment for on-the-job injuries.

### ***Local Information***

Lexington, a city of approximately 300,000, is located in the heart of the Kentucky Bluegrass region. The city, surrounded by more than 300 thoroughbred and standard bred horse farms, is a world center for the equine industry. In the area around Lexington you will find stately groves of trees, pre-Civil War stone fences, acres of lush, verdant pastures, and horses. The city also serves as a regional center for health care, education, agriculture, and finance. Lexington has a rather moderate climate. There are four distinct seasons with no prolonged periods of cold, rain, wind, or snow. The annual mean temperature is 55 degrees; spring to fall 64 degrees; fall to spring 46 degrees.

Lexington is the home of the University of Kentucky, the state's land-grant institution. The University includes leading research centers in the physical and biological sciences. The UK Chandler Health Care System is a major source for research and education in medicine, nursing, and the allied health sciences. The University maintains twelve separate libraries, including a national repository for federal documents

and a medical library. The library holdings of the University are available to VA Psychology Interns. One division of the Lexington VA is physically joined to the UK Chandler Health Care System and is located on the UK campus. Additionally, UK's Division I athletics program boasts the Kentucky Wildcat Basketball team, perennial March Madness and Final Four attendees.

**Transportation:** The city is easily accessible by air and ground transportation. Lexington is located at the intersections of I-64 and I-75, the Bluegrass Parkway, and the Mountain Parkway. The Bluegrass Airport is served by six major airlines. Traffic hassles associated with larger cities are not a problem in Lexington, and all areas of the city including the VA are easily accessible from the interstate or in town highways. Public transportation is available and serves all areas of the city.

**Educational Facilities:** There are numerous public and private institutions of higher learning within easy commuting distance of Lexington, including the University of Kentucky, Transylvania University, Eastern Kentucky University, Georgetown College, Centre College, Lexington Theological Seminary, Kentucky State University, and Lexington Community College. The local system of public schools receives high marks on the state level. The system includes magnet schools and special programs for gifted and developmentally challenged students. There are several private secular and parochial primary and secondary schools located in different parts of the city. Lexington maintains a comprehensive public library system with multiple branch locations.

**Housing:** Housing in Lexington is both abundant and diverse. Choices range from ante-bellum homes in the center of the city to apartments, condominiums, and single family homes in newly developed suburban areas. Rental costs are considered moderate relative to major metropolitan areas of the country.

**Recreational Opportunities:** There are many recreational opportunities in Lexington. Being a university center, Lexingtonians are avid fans of college sports. Lexington is also home to the Lexington Legends, a minor league baseball team. The city maintains a system of well planned public parks, playgrounds, swimming pools, tennis courts, golf courses, and a nature preserve. Lexington's proximity to the Appalachian mountain range and its numerous rivers and lakes makes it an excellent place for those who enjoy boating, fishing, hiking, camping, mountain climbing, and cycling. The state of Kentucky has a nationally renowned system of state parks that offer low cost outdoor recreation. Local equestrian events include a horse show in July, thoroughbred races at Keeneland in April and October, and trotting races at Red Mile in June and September.

**Cultural Activities:** Lexington is blessed with an unusually rich cultural life for a city its size. The Lexington Philharmonic, Central Kentucky Youth Orchestra, and the Lexington Singers present classical and popular concerts throughout the year. The city government sponsors classical, jazz, blues, and pop music concerts in local parks during the summer. The restored 19th Century Opera House offers the annual "Broadway Live!" series bringing musical theater companies to Lexington. Theater groups sponsored by the University and the city government offer a variety of traditional and experimental presentations. The visual arts are represented at the Headley-Whitney and University of Kentucky museums, numerous private galleries, and periodic showings by the Lexington Arts League. A comedy club features many well-established comedians. Locally owned restaurants are diverse and delicious, offering wide ranges of cuisine from the classic to the exotic in all price ranges. Two large shopping malls are located in Lexington, including a newly refurbished Fayette Mall with 200 stores including 4 department stores. Finally, popular and traditional forms of music are readily available through multiple venues, ranging from taverns that feature local bands to Rupp Arena, a 23,000 seat auditorium which features major artists.

Lexington is a comfortable city in which to live and work. It is noted for its low crime rate, cleanliness, friendly people, and a Southern pace and hospitality. It is a city that offers a full array of services for both singles and families. It accommodates a wide variety of personal tastes and lifestyles.